

# Bats

## Cool Websites

Bat Conservation International	<a href="http://www.batcon.org">www.batcon.org</a>
Bat World Sanctuary	<a href="http://www.batworld.org">www.batworld.org</a>
KidZone Bats	<a href="http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/bats">www.kidzone.ws/animals/bats</a>
Lubee Bat Conservancy	<a href="http://www.lubee.org/">www.lubee.org/</a>
Warks Batgroup	<a href="http://www.jwaller.co.uk/batgroup/other_links.asp">www.jwaller.co.uk/batgroup/other_links.asp</a>
Bat CREW	<a href="http://www.batcrew.com">www.batcrew.com</a>
Bat Information	<a href="http://weah4.tripod.com/id5.html">http://weah4.tripod.com/id5.html</a>
National Geographic Bat Patrol article	<a href="http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0204/feature7/index.html">http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0204/feature7/index.html</a>

It is unfortunate that the average person has a deep prejudice against the bat.

Without looking or thinking for himself, he accepts a lot of absurd tales about the winged one, and passes them on and on, never caring for the injustice he does or the pleasure he loses.

The bat is the climax of creation in many things, highly developed in brain, marvelously keen in senses, clad in exquisite fur and equipped, above all, with the crowning glory of flight.

He is the prototype and the realization of the Fairy of the Wood we loved so much as children, and so hated to be robbed of by grown-ups, who should have known better.

I would give a good deal to have a bat colony where I could see it daily, and would go a long way to meet some new kind of bat.

Ernest Thomas Seton - 1913

# Bats of America

## Essential Allies

Bats have lived in America since the age of dinosaurs. Yet today they rank among our most endangered wildlife. Their loss threatens the balance of nature and human economies.

Bats are the primary predators of night-flying insects and consume enormous quantities of them. Free-tailed bats from just three caves near San Antonio, Texas, eat a million pounds of insects nightly, including many costly agricultural pests.

One little brown myotis can catch more than 1,000 mosquito-sized insects in an hour, often two in a single second. A nursing mother eats more than her body weight nightly.

A red bat that eats 100 moths may prevent egg-laying that would have produced 25,000 caterpillars that attack farmers' crops. Silver-haired, long-eared and many other kinds of bats help keep countless forest insects in check..

Long-nosed bats are primary pollinators of numerous desert plants, including saguaro and organ pipe cacti and the agaves from which tequila is made. They also disperse seeds.

Many garden pests can hear bats from 100 feet away and will avoid areas where bats are present. Researchers have shown that broadcasting simulated bat sounds over cornfields will scare away corn earworm moths, reducing damage from their larvae by 50 percent.

Just 150 big brown bats can eat enough cucumber beetles each summer to protect farmers from 33 million of the beetles' rootworm larvae, which cause crop damage of nearly \$1 billion a year.

Pallid bats benefit ranchers by consuming large quantities of grasshoppers and crickets.

In Austin, Texas, free-tailed bats have become a major tourist attraction. Hundreds of people gather each summer evening to watch the bats emerge from their roost under a downtown bridge.

The most significant threats to bat survival are persecution by humans and loss of habitat. Vandalism and disturbance of roosting caves, loss of tree snags and careless use of pesticides seriously threaten remaining populations.

**Despite their many values, more than half of the United States' 47 bat species are now endangered or in rapid decline.**

# Bats of America

## Clever Survivors

Bats are, for their size, America's longest-lived mammals. Little brown myotis can live up to 34 years.

The California leaf-nosed bat can live in hot, desert climates for months at a time without a drink of water.

Bats survive the highest and lowest temperatures of any American mammal. Red bats can hibernate at 23° F and little brown myotis can rear young at 122° F.

A hibernating little brown myotis can reduce its heart rate to just 20 beats per minute and can stop breathing for 48 minutes at a time. Many survive cold climates by hibernating for more than seven months each winter.

Far from being blind, the California leaf-nosed bat can spot small insects on all but the darkest nights using vision alone.

The western pipistrelle has an eight-inch wingspan, but weighs less than a nickel. It is one of America's smallest mammals.

Townsend's big-eared bats maneuver like helicopters to pluck insects from foliage or to drink from tiny pools. In contrast, Mexican free-tailed bats are built like jets. They require large open spaces to maneuver and fly up to 10,000 feet high.

Pallid bats often detect insects by listening for their footsteps. They can respond accurately from up to 16 feet away to a sound lasting only 1/4,000<sup>th</sup> of a second.

The spotted bat is one of America's most spectacular mammals. It has black, angora-like fur with striking white spots, and its huge ears and translucent wings are pink.

Fringe-tailed bats take turns baby-sitting so their pups are never unattended. Each mother recognizes her own pup's unique voice.

Male Mexican free-tailed bats sing to attract mates. Pound for pound, a mother Mexican free-tailed bat produces more than five times as much milk as an average Holstein cow. Females who lose their babies help other mothers nurse their young.

**Loss of bats destabilizes ecosystems and increases our reliance on chemical alternatives that often threaten both environmental and human health.**